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JOHNSON.

SKETCH OF THE JOHNSON FAMILY GATHERING

HELD AT SOUTHBORO, MASS., JUNE 26, 1878,

AND THE

HISTORICAL ADDRESS BY REV. J. H. TEMPLE,

AS WELL AS THE

POEMS WRITTEN FOR THE OCCASION BY
MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY.

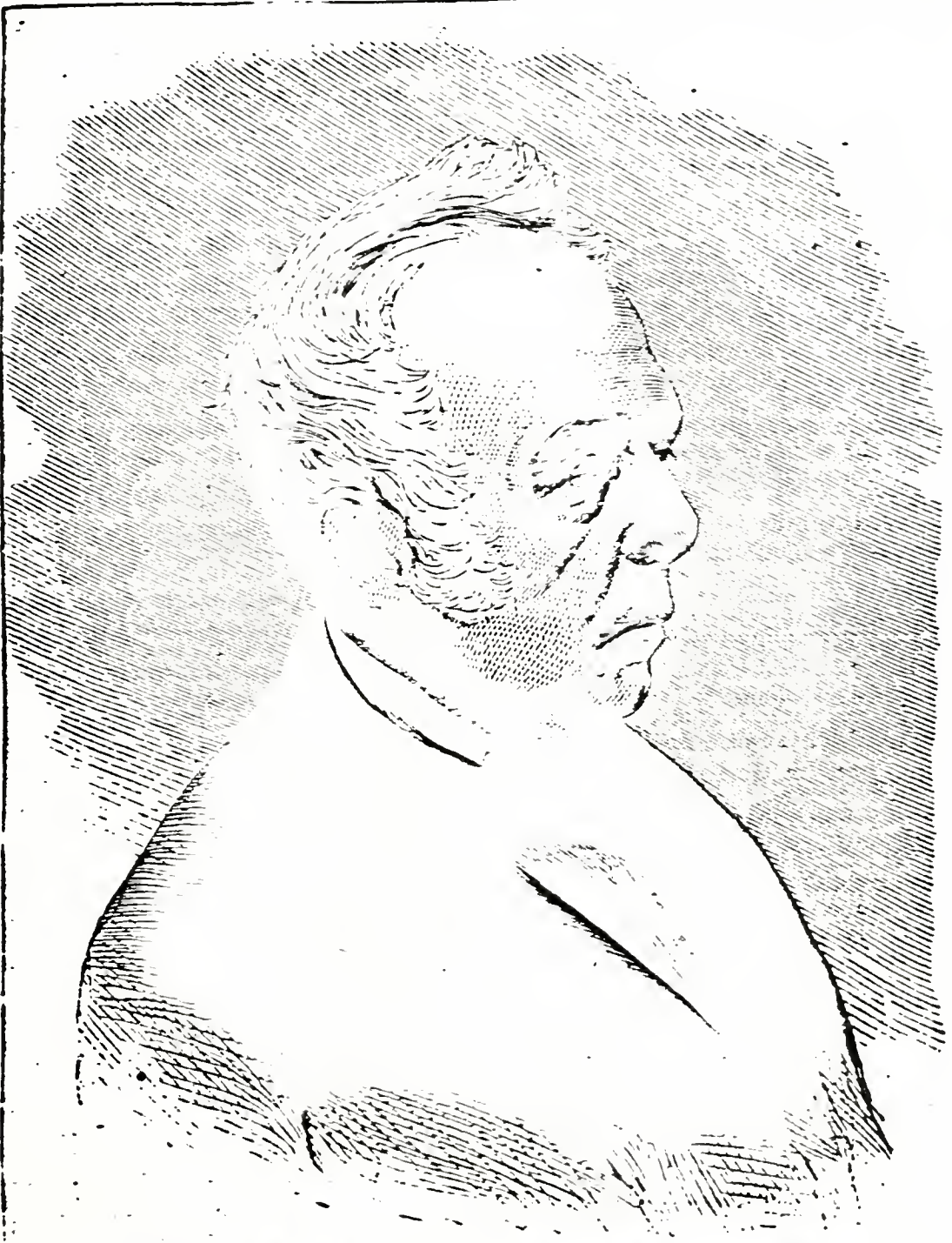
ALSO, SOME EXTRACTS FROM EARLY RECORDS.

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ditional Notes.*

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HARPER'S WEEKLY.



THE LATE REVERDY JOHNSON.—(PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRADY, WASHINGTON.)

THE JOHNSON FAMILY GATHERING

AT SOUTHBORO, MASS.

It has long been the purpose of the descendants of the first Johnson who settled in what is now Southboro to come together on the old homestead for a social reunion. June 26th was selected as the day. A large tent was procured in which to have the exercises of the day and also the dinner. The day proved to be one of the loveliest of the season, and the scenery of Southboro was in its summer glory. The old homestead is now occupied by Mr. Daniel B. Johnson and two sisters. In front of the house was an evergreen arch bearing the words and date, "Scattered—1756 Re-united" On the opposite side of the road and over the approach to the tent, was a similar arch with the words, "Johnson Family Gathering." Another arch east of the house with the date "1712" marked the spot on which a house once stood. At 10.30 A. M. the friends marched from the house to the tent, preceded by the Union Brass Band of Southville. Mr. Dexter Newton of Southboro was President of the day. At the tent the platform was decorated with flowers. Over it were the words, "In God we trust." At one side the dates 1778 and 1878 and the word "Welcome" were placed.

The exercises commenced with a hymn by the audience, Mrs. J. H. Robinson presiding at the piano.

2d. Prayer by Rev. H. M. Holmes of Southboro.

3d. Song by a Southboro quartette, consisting of Messrs. Henry Newton, D. C. Nichols, Mrs. S. N. Thompson and Mrs. Chas. Ball.

The historical address of the Johnson family was given by Rev. Josiah H. Temple of Framingham, and we give it in full herewith:

ADDRESS AT THE JOHNSON FAMILY GATHERING, JUNE 26, 1878.

Ten generations of our family have come upon the stage since the first of the line settled in America. Six generations have occupied this homestead. Five generations are represented in our gathering to-day.

William Johnson, the American ancestor of the Southboro branch of the family, settled in Charlestown, Mass., as early as 1634.

He is supposed to have come from Henehill, a parish near Canterbury, Kent County, England.

He and his wife Elizabeth were admitted to the church in Charlestown, Feb. 13, 1635. He was made freeman March 4, 1635.

By trade he was a brick maker, and belonged to the class of settlers that had the means of providing a home for themselves, and meeting the charges incident to a new plantation. Like the other early settlers of Charlestown, who had families, he was assigned a house lot of two acres. This was situated upon the Main St. He also received, at the same time, an allotment of ten acres in the "Great Corn Field." He had a share in the division of Malden lands in 1633; and in addition, in 1653, received as his proportionate share of the "Mystick-side land," 27 acres of woodland, and 4 1-2 acres of Common land. He also had three rights in the "cow commons."

Though not in public office, his successful

management of his affairs, throughout the trying period of building up a new town, shows him to have been a man of energy and method in business: and his characteristic handwriting and style of composition show him to have possessed a good education.

One or two children were born before the parents left England; and they had in all 6 sons and 2 daughters.

John, the oldest son, settled in Haverhill, Mass. in 1657, where he became the founder of one of the largest and most respectable families in the town. At the terrible slaughter of the inhabitants by the Indians August 29, 1708, he, at the age of 75, was killed in his own house.

The sons Joseph, Nathaniel, Zechariah and Isaac settled in Charlestown, and had large families.

Jonathan, the third son, settled in Marlboro, and is the head of the Southboro branch.

Of the daughters, Ruhamah married John Knight of Charlestown, and died, leaving one son and three daughters.

Elizabeth married Edward Wyer of Charlestown, by whom she was the mother of eleven children, most of whom lived to adult age, and raised large families. Some of her descendants have resided in this neighborhood.

Two of William's sons learned the trade of a blacksmith—viz: John, who settled in Haverhill, and Jonathan our lineal ancestor.

In those days the blacksmith's trade was considered the highest of the mechanical arts. Almost anybody could use the saw, and anger and shave, and help frame a house or barn by the "try rule"; but only a skilled workman could weld and temper iron and steel. And as most kitchen utensils as well as the farming and other tools were, in whole or in part, hand wrought, the blacksmith was an essential to every household, and was honored accordingly. Hence in most of the early towns a home lot and all its accruing rights and privileges was set apart for a blacksmith. The only other office to which such a gift was made was the minister. And it is a fact worthy of special note that when the home lots in Marlboro were assigned to the proprietors, Nov. 28, 1669, the lots of the minister and

blacksmith were of equal size, viz., 30 acres. (The usual size of the lot assigned to a young man without a family was 16 acres). The condition imposed in the grant was as follows: "It is ordered, that Jonathan Johnson shall have the 30 acres of upland formerly granted to a smith, with all the accommodations answerable and suitable thereunto, on condition that the said Johnson do dwell in this town seven years, and do the town's work as a smith; and also, if he at the seven years end leave the town do his endeavour to settle another smith in his room—both which if he do, the said land and accommodations shall be his and his heirs and assigns forever."

His house-lot was one of the most eligible in the village, being located directly south of the Old Common. Being thus central his shop was the general resort for news and the general transaction of business. Public notices were usually required to be posted here. The "smith" preceded the "tavern" by many years.

Jonathan was born Aug. 14th, 1641, and settled in Marlboro immediately on attaining his majority, and only two years after the incorporation of the town. He married the next year and so his family life and the life of the town were substantially co-eval.

He appears to have been greatly prospered in his business, as shown by his ability to purchase home lots and other land whenever they came into market. His landed estates were very extensive. A 20 acre home lot entitled its owner to certain shares in all meadow lands, wood lands, uplands and cow commons. Marlboro contained originally 36,000 acres, and there were not over 60 proprietors among whom the land was to be divided. Probably Jonathan Johnson received his full share.

Of meadow lands, he had 32 acres on the Assabet river, a large interest in the Storey Brook and Sudbury River meadows, three corner meadow near Deerfoot meadow, a meadow near Pine Hill, and a lot in Crane meadow.

He also had several cedar swamp lots.

The Proprietors Records give a summary of the grants which he received on account of his "primitive rights," in the later divisions as follows: Within the cow commons, 263 acres; without the cow commons, 348 acres.

At the time of his death, he and his sons owned or held by division rights, his own homestead at Marlboro Center, the farm near the Y, the John and Elisha Johnson homesteads, the Peter Fay homestead, and the Matthews homestead in the south part of the town.

His handwriting, samples of which exist in deeds and other documents, indicates a man of marked individuality and force of character. He wrote his will but a few days before his death at the age of 71; yet the bold clear cut letters would do credit to a practiced penman. He was well educated for the times, and in his later years was employed by the town as school master for several successive years. He taught the first school kept in the first school house built by Marlboro, the schools having been previously kept in private houses. And it is a pleasant coincidence, that his grandson Timothy kept the first school that was opened in Southboro after the town was incorporated.

He married, Oct. 14, 1663, Mary Newton, daughter of Richard and Anne Newton. They had three children who lived to grow up: Mary, William and Jonathan.

Mary married John Matthews, who settled in Southboro on what was known as the Col. Wm. Ward place, afterwards the Jonathan Walker place. Matthews built his house there at about the same time that Wm. Johnson, his brother-in-law, built where we now are. During "Queen Anne's War," which lasted from 1702 to 1713, his house was "picketed" and was used as a garrison house for himself and his neighbors, Samuel Ward, Jr., and Wm. Johnson, and their families, for refuge in case of an attack by hostile Indians. (By the "old cart road," which ran from the old Johnson house to the Matthews house, the distance was less than three-fourths of a mile.)

Mary Matthews had four children, and died before her father. Her children received as part of their mothers' portion the place in the south part of the town, afterwards known as the Matthews place, or better, as the Moses Gilmore place, where John and Daniel settled when they came of age, i. e., in 1717.

Jonathan Jr., the youngest child of Jonathan, settled near the Y in So. Marlboro. He learned the blacksmith's trade of his

father, and had a shop.

His wife was Mary Kerley, by whom he had nine children, four sons and five daughters.

He was killed by the Indians, Oct. 12, 1708, six weeks after his uncle John was killed at Haverhill.

Two of his sons became noted in the Indian wars of '44 and '55, and some of his grandsons were prominent in the war of the Revolution. Jonathan Jr., was in what was known as the "Bloody morning scout" near Fort Edward, Sept. 8, 1755, with Col. Eshraim Williams. He escaped only with his life; but rejoined his Co. and remained through the fall. He was in Capt. John Taplin's company, which was made up largely of Southboro men. At the opening of the next campaign April 1756, he re-enlisted, and served in the Crown Point expedition. He was out again the next year from Feb. 18 till Dec. 20; for most of the time he was clerk of the company. Dillington, Seth, Paul, and Mathias Johnson, and Silas Mathews were out in Capt. Taplin's Co. in the campaigns of '56 and '57. Dillington enlisted at the age of 16, and served through the war. He was with Capt. John Burk's Rangers, and taken prisoner Aug. 9 '57, at the capitulation of Fort William Henry, and carried to Canada. At the breaking out of the Revolution, he was living at Guilford, Vt., and took a prominent part in the struggle on the "New Hampshire Grants." In 1786, he was living in Rutland, Mass. Hezekiah Johnson was out in the campaign of '56, was taken sick at Albany, where he died. Moses Johnson, Jr. was also in service in the Crown Point expedition of '56. Isaac Johnson, Jr. belonged to Capt. Joseph Howe's troop, and served with the company at Charlestown, N.H. in the summer of 1746. William Johnson, Jr. (then of Worcester) was called out on the alarm about Fort William Henry in August, '57. John and Elisha Johnson enlisted in Capt. Ebenezer Ingoldsby's Co., Col. Job Cushing's Reg., and were in service during Sept. and Oct. 1777. They were present at the surrender of Burgoyne Oct. 17. Elisha was drafted July 30, 1778, for 6 weeks service in Rhode Island; but hired as a substitute his nephew Isaac Johnson (afterwards of Vernon, Vt.) paying him 20 pounds.

William Johnson, our lineal ancestor, and second son of Jonathan the blacksmith, was born Dec. 15, 1665. And in him we come to the homestead where we are assembled to-day.

Probably he was accustomed from childhood to hunt cattle in the pastures lying to the eastward and just across the brook from us, and to mow the grass on the Crane meadow lot to the north. And when his father died, in the Third Division, the 30 acre lot which lies hereabouts, he probably determined to make this spot his home.

But the important question arises, why, in this time of almost constant wars with the savages, did the young man and his young wife venture to set up their dwelling so far from the central village, and so exposed to incursions by the Indians? The distance from the meeting house by the nearest travelled path was not less than 3 miles. The nearest house was his brother-in-law Matthew's. War alarms were almost constant. The usurpation of the colonial government by Andros, and the virtual suspension of civil authority, which just then occurred, paralyzed all municipal power. The French authorities in Canada took advantage of this disturbed condition of things to stir up the Indians to renewed depredation on the frontiers, which resulted in a few months in the declaration of war between England and France, known in history as "King William's War."

It required courage at such a time to strike out into the distant outskirts, and there must have been some strong motive to induce one to run the hazards.

An intelligent answer to this inquiry leads me to consider briefly a fact or two in local history characteristic of the times, and bearing directly on the early movements of all our families.

The houselots, which were assigned to the original proprietors of Marlboro in 1660, contained from 15 to 50 acres, and were devoted to dwellings, orchards and tillage; and as nearly all the settlers depended mainly on agriculture for subsistence, it was necessary to provide forage for their cattle elsewhere. And so in the course of the first winter, meadow lots, as they were called, were assigned to each settler. These meadows were the alluvial lands upon the borders of streams, and the basins among

the hills where the bursting out of springs and the wash of the higher grounds gave growth to abundance of grass. All such meadows were then free from underbrush, and mostly bare of trees. Indeed, the whole country, except the swamps, was free from underbrush. Men on horseback could ride anywhere, so they kept clear of miry swamps and deep water. For in order to give them good hunting, the Indians were accustomed to burn over the whole country, annually, after the fall of the leaves in autumn, which effectually kept down the young growth, and left only the old timber standing. The rank growth of thatch and other native meadow grasses made fierce fires which consumed vegetation clean. The meadows were thus all ready for the scythe; and the quality of the grass was much better than such lands now produce.

Having assigned meadow lots to each householder, then came the important matter of summer pasturage for cattle. And this led to the setting apart of what was termed the "Cow Common." This took in all the uplands immediately surrounding the house lots, forming a belt of about one and a half miles wide, bounded southerly by Stony brook, westerly by Stirrup brook, northerly by Assabet river, etc. And it was ordered that this immense tract shall "remain a perpetual cow common, for the use of the town, never to be allotted without the consent of all the inhabitants and proprietors thereof." This included all that is now Southboro Centre. And this order led to the early settlement of so many families at Fayville, and elsewhere to the south of Stony Brook. For the uplands suitable for farm homesteads must be sought outside of these "Cow Commons."

Here then we get the prudential reason why William Johnson built here. His father had a large interest in these Stony brook meadows, a lot in Crane meadow, and the three corner meadow not far below. And his 30 acre lot of upland was laid out to him at this point.

To the eye and to the hope, it was an inviting spot—as clear of forests then as it is to-day—surrounded with an amphitheatre of hills, with a charming vista opening to the north. The near meadows were teeming with their burden of nutritious grass:

and the green pastures lay just over the brook; and the brook itself added beauty to the landscape, and murmured of gladness, freshness and fertility. To the south and west lay the undivided uplands, which doubtless the young man even then hoped one day to own. It is not to be wondered at, that with such possessions and such prospects for the future, he forgot the hazards to which he and his would be exposed.

He located here probably in 1688. The first house, which was a small affair, stood to the north of the Webster Johnson house. He built his second house in the year 1712. This stood easterly from the present mansion, about a rod to the northeast of the pump. It was a two-story house, large and convenient for the times. One reason for the change of location, probably, was, that he might be nearer to the grist-mill which appears to have been set up in 1712 or 1713, and which continued in use till about 1795. This was perhaps the only grist-mill in this part of the town, the privilege next below having only a saw-mill. There is reason for supposing that the mill was built by William Johnson and John Matthews in equal shares; and that Matthews sold out his interest to William Ward. And on June 20, 1736, Ward sells his half of the mill to Johnson, who makes over the whole mill, Feb. 21, 1739, by deed of trust, to his son Isaac. The mill house stood on the easterly side of the brook, and northerly side of the highway. A part of the dam still remains.

William Johnson was twice married. His first wife was Hannah Larkin, daughter of Thomas Larkin of Charlestown. They were married in 1688, and she died Dec. 18, 1696, leaving four children. His second wife was Hannah Rider, daughter of William Rider of Watertown, afterwards of Sherborn. She survived her husband.

He had in all 12 children, 6 sons and 6 daughters. Of the daughters, 2 died young. Hannah married Thomas Stowe of Marlboro, and had 16 children, (see his will).

Mary married Thomas Green of Shrewsbury, afterwards of Hardwick, and had 6 children.

Ruth married David Woods of Southboro. Besides the usual "setting out" their father gave the girls "a farm" to be held in common.

Of the sons, William, the oldest, learned the black-smith trade. And when he came of age, his grandfather gave him 27 acres of land, being the south part of the Peter Fay homestead, where he built a house and shop. This was in 1710 or '11. He was what would be called then and now "a smart man," and became a somewhat noted speculator. He was one of the proprietors of Shrewsbury in 1718, and drew a home lot there, though they did not remove there. In 1727, he was chosen moderator of the first town meeting held in Southboro. In 1741 he bought 500 acres of land lying in the present town of Charlemont, and soon after sold out his interest in Southboro to his brother Ebenezer and removed to Worcester, where he died in 1757.

Moses lived in Southboro.

Ebenezer lived on the Peter Fay place, which, at his death in 1767, went into the possession of Maj. Josiah Fay, grandfather of Dea Peter Fay.

Jacob was drowned in Westboro, at the age of 22.

Isaac, our lineal ancestor, stayed on the homestead. He was a miller, which probably was one reason why his father kept him at home. But it was a peculiarity of our Johnson line, that the oldest sons were given a good trade or a good farm away, and the youngest surviving son who marries inherits the homestead. And so it happened that in 1739—as soon after his son's marriage as he had proved that the wife he had chosen was a kind and provident daughter-in-law, the father by deed of trust, made over to Isaac the homestead, including the mill, on condition that himself should have good maintenance, and his widow after his decease should have all the privileges and comforts of a good home during her natural life.

Isaac was faithful to his difficult trust, which included the care of an invalid brother. His father lived for 15 years; his mother survived 18 years, and his brother 46 years.

Owing to these peculiar circumstances of the family, and that his mother and brother might have a quiet home—as soon as his elder children began to come of age, he prepared to build a new and more convenient house. The intention was that the oldest boy Isaac, who was the miller, should

take a wife and occupy the old house, which was then in good repair and was nearer the mill.

The contract for putting up the new house (the one now standing) was executed June 17, 1758—122 years and 9 days ago. And well it may have stood so long; and well it may stand for another century and a quarter. The timber for the frame was all cut on the farm and was all of oak. The sills, summers and joists for the lower floor were of white oak. The sills were 9 in.; the main cross timbers were 10x12; the beams and girders were 8x9; the summers 9x11, and all other parts in the same proportion and every stick in the frame was hewed or sawed up to a square edge. It was made to last.

Isaac Johnson was married Oct. 3, 1733, to Rachel Thomas, daughter of Joseph Thomas of Lebanon, Ct.

Of their 10 children 3 died in infancy. Of those who grew up, Elizabeth married 1st, Richard Pratt of Worcester by whom she had 3 children; 2nd, Stephen Soddler of Upton, by whom she had no children.

Isaac Jr. soon after his marriage forsook the old house and mill and removed to Spencer on the border of North Brookfield, where he built mills near the outlet of "Johnson's Pond" — so named for him. He died in 1769, and his sons removed to Hinsdale, now Vernon, Vt. where most of them reared large families. His widow married 2nd, Stephen Webster, of Bernardston, afterwards of Northfield, Mass., where she died Aug. 1, 1809.

Rachel married 1st Dea. — Noyes of Sudbury; 2nd, Zephaniah Thayer of Vernon, Vt. None of her descendants are now living.

Hannah married Tyrus Newton of Southboro, whose descendants are still numerous in Upton and Worcester, and are well represented here to-day.

William settled on a farm given him by his father in Westboro; he had 3 wives and 9 children. Only 3 of the children married, but the family is well represented here to-day.

John was twice married and had twelve children. He received from his father 30 acres of the westerly side of the home-lot with dwelling house and barn thereon, also 58 acres of outlands, and one-third part of

his father's right in undivided common lands. His youngest son, at the age of 8, has travelled 1000 m. to be with us to-day.

Elisha had the home and grist mill, together with 93 acres of outlands and $\frac{1}{3}$ part of the right in undivided common lands. He was twice married, first to Abigail Newton, sister of Tyrus of Southboro; second to Sarah Perry, daughter of Nathan Perry of Worcester. He had 8 children. His daughter Abigail, who married Capt. John Temple of Framingham, is still living at the age of 91.

Elisha was a man of stately presence, urbane manners and great kindness of heart. Says one who knew him well, "He came the nearest to my ideal of what a Christian should be, of any man I have ever known." His wife Sarah was remarkable for her knowledge of the Bible, having committed to memory the larger part of the Psalms and New Testament. She died at the good old age of 95.

Like most of the early generations, Isaac Johnson was a tall man, full 6 ft. in height and of powerful frame. He was a man of strong convictions, deep religious feelings, and of well cultivated mind. His library contained "Edwards' History of Redemption," Josephus "Jewish Wars," "Lee's Contemplations," "Poole's Annotations," in four large quarto vols., and other works of this class. "He was a great reader," so his grand daughter (my mother) says; and his books, (several of which are in my possession) indicate constant usage. His copy of the New England Psalm Book, contains printed tunes in the fashion of the present day.

He was an industrious man, and could not put up with idleness and shiftlessness in any form. He had a bit of poor rhyme, evidently of his own composition, which exactly expressed his sentiments, and which he was accustomed to repeat aloud whenever he saw a man of mature age, with a fishpole, trailing the grass in his Stuy brook meadow:

"Seldom thrives the fisherman,
And the fowler never:
Both they and the hunter man
A begging go together."

It was characteristic of the early generations of our Johnson family, that the father gave the children—both boys and girls

1745
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— their "portion" in real estate, so as to ensure them a substantial home.

It was common for the father to invest his surplus earnings in land rather than notes; and the same idea of security and permanence influenced him in providing for his children.

Another characteristic was, the scrupulous fidelity with which family trusts were carried out. Their honor was as good as a deed or bond, and their father's word was as good as their own.

A striking instance of this is found in the life of William, who first settled this homestead. His father Jonathan had expressed to him the intention of giving to the children of his daughter Mary, the land which is now the "Gilmore farm" as their residuary portion. But he died before the deed was executed, and by the terms of his will this farm went to William. But in six days after his father's will is probated, William makes over this entire property to his sister's children, on the ground—as he states in the deed—that such was his father's intention.

I honor the memory of such a man! I will not conceal the fact that I glory in a descent from such an ancestor! I hold up his example to you to-day, as worthy of your veneration and imitation! I do not hesitate to say that in this respect I believe "the former days were better than these."

If now a father should die with a deed to a daughter unexecuted, and a clause in his will gave all the estate not otherwise disposed of, to a son—where is the son who would not accept the gift? Where is the son who would not fall back on his personal rights? Where is the son that would complete the execution of the deed, because it was his father's intention—and thus diminish by so much his own estate, to which he was in law entitled?

We of this fast age glory in the fact of our great free country—which means, as we use the term, the possibilities of great wheat fields at the West, or great wealth in some manufacturing centre, or in some fortunate speculation; which means a free homestead on the prairies; which means free thought and free religion, away from the conservatism which is engendered by a New England Sabbath and a Puritanic faith. We sneer at the boy who has so little force of

character as to stay at home and take care of his parents, and keep the ancestral acres!

Ah! we forget that the home feeling, and the homestead associations, and the ancestral religion, are the foundations of a pure morality; that these home associations are the warp into which are woven the refinements of society,—the gentler virtues, the sweet charities, the holy joys of life. We forget that true honor and honesty have birth only in these virtues and charities and joys, whose vital germs are quickened in the sunlight of such principles, and whose vigor, and manly strength, and endurance, are gathered in a boyhood which breathes in the air of such a home.

England's safety lies in the fact that her estates are "entailed" in law and in love.

America's danger lies in the fact that her children are never homesick.

Following the address was music by the Band. Then an original poem was read by Eliza Johnson Wheeler, of No. Brookfield, which was well received by the audience. Song by the quartette.

Dea. Webster Johnson from Kalamazoo, Mich., and a native of Southboro, was present and warmly welcomed by his former citizens. He is 85 years of age.

Mrs. Abigail Temple, mother of Rev. J. H. Temple, is the eldest one of the Johnson family living, and is 91 years old.

Dinner was furnished by E. Sawtell of Framingham.

In the afternoon Mr. John Johnson was toastmaster and gave

THE FOLLOWING SENTIMENTS.

1. The memory of our ancestors—their precious legacy to us.
2. The sixth generation from William Johnson of Charlestown—now represented only by Mrs. Abigail J. Temple and Dea. Webster Johnson.
3. Isaac Johnson, who built the present mansion house in 1756—a noble specimen of the Puritans in faith and practice.
4. The family cow, brought to the homestead by Sarah Perry Johnson just 100

years ago. The milk of her progeny has flavored our coffee to-day.

5. The Vernon branch of the Southboro root.

6. The Clergy who were cradled in Southboro.

7. The Fays—some of them have enough Johnson blood in their veins to give them breadth and height.

8. Southboro—the birthplace and adopted home of many families who are fit representatives of the best New England character.

9. The old times, and the new.

10. The Homestead—volunteer by Curtis Newton.

Responses to the above toasts were made by Dr. J. H. Robinson. Dea. Peter Fay, Mr. Isaac Johnson of Upton, Dr. O. O. Johnson of Framingham, and Curtis Newton. Declamation by Clesson Lowell. The exercises were interspersed with music and song, closing with a parting song written by Rev. J. H. Temple, to the tune of Auld Lang Syne.

EXTRACTS FROM MARLBORO TOWN RECORDS.

Dec. 1, 1699.—At this meeting the town by vote chose Jonathan Johnson Senr., to be school master for one year ensuing this present date. The year to begin on the 11th of this instant, December, and said Johnson carefully to teach all youth that are sent to him to read and write and cast accounts, and for this, his years service as school master, he is to be paid fourteen pounds in money, the school to be kept at Jonathan Johnson's now dwelling house until the school house be finished. The above Jonathan Johnson, Senr., then present, signed to this agreement.

March 2, 1704—5.—Jonathan Johnson, Jr. was chosen Highway Surveyor.

June 28, 1705.—To Jonathan Johnson, Senr., for a staple for ye pound, and spikes, 11d.

Feb. 26, 1706—7.—Among the debts allowed by the Town of Marlboro, we find the following record:

To Jonathan Johnson, Senr., for keeping a school according to agreement made with him in June 3, 1706, at a Town Meeting after abatement for the time he was taken off by

the troubles with the Indians, in July and August, £10. 3s.

At a meeting of the fresholders and other inhabitants of the town, May ye 26, 1707, for to choose a school master, and raise a sum for highway repair; first it was voted that Jonathan Johnson, Senr., be our school master; secondly by vote, Richard Barnes, Senr., Sergeant John Bowker and Peter Rice were chosen a committee to treat with said Jonathan Johnson, Senr., and agree with him upon as good terms as they can.

And in order to a full conclusion it was voted: That the agreement made last year, viz: in 1706, shall be and is confirmed for the present year. The same time for the beginning. And in all respects to be fulfilled accordingly. Signed by Abraham Williams, Town Clerk, by vote of the Town and in their name. Jonathan Johnson, Senr., May 26, 1707.

Mar. 5, 1711.—Jonathan Johnson, Sr., was chosen one of the Selectmen.

POEM.

WRITTEN EXPRESSLY FOR THIS OCCASION BY
ELIZA JOHNSON WHEELER AND READ BY
HER.

Dear brothers and kindred, a greeting to all:
We haste to obey your kindly call:
From the east and the west with willing feet:
To the "Old Homestead's" snug retreat.

Though unfamiliar your faces be,
The sap of this old family tree,
That pulsates in each heart to-day,
Is warm, red blood! Ay who shall say

That they ever knew in all these parts,
A Johnson born with a frozen heart?
Or ever saw one rich or poor
Repulse a beggar from his door?

From the sturdy "John of the English Isle,"
(Whose case just now must remain on file),
Down to wee little Johnny of yesterday
Descends the mantle of charity.

A Johnson's charity! who ever saw
One light in weight—the material raw?
Fagged at the ends, or the nap worn off,
Or such like shabby, contemptible stuff?

You see, we've got our own trumpet to blow,
Our constituents are not invited you know;
So let us each stand up like a man,
And blow for his own particular clan.

Our clan are not rich, but honest your see;
Not aweet—we grew on the sour side of a tree.

But none of us now, kind heaven be thanked,
Ever got into Congress or plundered a bank.

No male of our tribe, I am happy to say,
Parts his hair in the middle, a la popinjay,
Drives a fast horse or bets at a cricket,
Or was e'er known to vote the Democrat ticket—

I suppose we shall quarrel before we get
through,

Whether ANDY belongs to us or to you.

You may have him, but don't leave him at
sixes and sevens,

If you do he will veto your passport to heaven.

Didst ever take up the Brockton ADVANCE?

There's Johnson blood in it—'tis seen at a
glance;

Subscribe then, light up the bright evening
taper,

And sit down and read your own family paper.

One word for our clan and then I will cease:

Fire-eaters in war, yet peaceful in peace;

Quarrelsome never, good neighbors and
friends,

Accepting unquestioned what Providence
sends.

When the need of the country was urgent and
great,

The Johnsons responded all over the States.

The spirit of ancestors stirred in the blood,

And carried them on through the fire and the
flood.

Far down where the southerly waters lave,
There's many an unknown and nameless grave,
Hid away from the sight mid the grass and
the flowers;

Whose occupant bears this name of ours.

And away from the curious world apart,

Some mother bears that name on her heart;

She will remember, though the world may
forget,

The name of her darling, her idolized pet.

Oh! when at last our labors are o'er;

When our feet shall have passed eternity's
shore;

When we've passed far beyond all the sorrow
and strife;

May our names be inscribed on the fair book
of life.

F. O. Brookfield, June 26, 1878.

THE HOMESTEAD.

There is not a spot on this beautiful earth
So dear to our hearts as the place of our birth,
The home of our fathers; the old Homestead
spot,

With its rocks and pure rills, can ne'er be for-
got.

May the all-wise God

Shed joys on the sod,

These grand old hills by our children be trod.

There scarce is a son who in strange lands doth
roam

But, ere long, pants to behold his childhood's
home;

Absorbed though he be in the business of life,
And caressed by kind friends, loving children
and wife.

May the all-wise God

Shed joys on the sod.

These grand old hills by our children be trod.

How charmingly sweet the songs of our moth-
ers,

And dear are the names of sisters and broth-
ers,

The Homestead delights; how they cling to
the mind,

In the hearts of the hosts they are ever en-
shrined.

May the all-wise God

Shed joys on the sod.

The grand old hills by our children be trod.

THE JOHNSON ANCESTRAL TREE.

BY MISS JOSIE JOHNSON.

Joy to the guests that throng this festal board,
Children and youth, strong men and grand-
sires gray,

Friends of the auld lang syne who meet once
more,

Or strangers to each other till to-day.

Dull care, retire; and gloomy sorrow flee,

As thus we gather round th' ancestral tree.

Our father Isaac, large and stalwart man,

The trunk appears, around whose rugged
strength

His Rachel twined, as vine on lordly oak,

While branches spread around of varying
length,

Among whose thrifty boughs, in verdure
dressed,

Bright sunbeams dance, and song-birds build
their nests.

Beneath its ample shade we meet to-day,

In spirit all, in body those who can;

A wreath of love and honor to entwine

Around the mem'ry of an honest man!

A type so rare in these degenerate days,

May well excite our pride and win our praise.

No trick of trade or shuffling game of chance

Made him the owner of these acres wide ;
 But patient industry and frugal care,
 With faith in God and sweet contentment,
 vied ;
 Honors unsought along his path were spread,
 And glory crowned him with his hoary head.
 Nor should we fail to join with his, her name,
 The greatest earthly blessing of his life ;
 How much to her he owed, no tongue can tell ?
 For three score years his true and loving
 wife ;
 Then drink this toast—in tea—to woman's
 health :
 "A frugal wife—her husband's truest wealth."
 How fair to-day appears this homestead dear,
 "The same, and not the same" he tilled of
 yore ;
 The mammoth rock still marks the old "Bock
 Field,"
 And "Stony Brook" still ripples o'er and o'er,
 But the "Old Orchard" long since passed away,
 The house he dwelt in yielded to decay.
 As now we stand upon this grass-grown plat
 Where stood a home, our father's home so
 long,
 How fancy conjures up to eye and ear,
 The scene of sadness and the joyous song ;
 Here Rachel soothed her children 'till they
 slept,
 And when a child was not, in sorrow wept.
 Years passed away; the girls grew up apace,
 Were caught in Cupid's snare, and borne
 away ;
 The boys soon yielded to a maiden's charms,
 And married her, as boys will do to-day ;
 Near the old homestead early settled down
 The Johnniest of the Johnson brothers, John.
 A sturdy man was he, six feet or more,
 With piercing eye and well built, supple frame;
 With nervous step he walked erect and bold;
 Fearless in heart, he met and overcame
 All obstacles—quick and impulsive, we
 So kind and true a friend but seldom see.
 'Twas said—I'll not declare a story true,
 Nor take offence should it provoke a smile—
 Good ears, well set, and on the windward side,
 Could sometimes hear him whisper half a
 mile !
 O, were these rocks and hills a Phonograph,
 'Twere better than my feeble words by half.
 His first love, Persis, faded in her prime,
 And left him like a bird with broken wing,
 Till Lydia came to cheer his lonely home,
 And his sad heart fresh joy and peace to bring;
 Think not the old forgotten for the new,
 Some hearts are large enough, I ween, for two.

Twelve sons and daughters shared his love and
 care ;
 Though I should call the roll from first to
 last,
 But one would answer "present:" he remain,
 A precious link to bind us to the past ;
 His thoughts are busy with the past today,
 He could a story tell, perhaps he may.
 Their children, where are they? A few have here
 The days festivities together shared;
 The many, whom we miss with fond regret,
 Are scattered wide, if cruel Death has
 spared ;
 Those who are here,—no longer young and gay,
 Have children with them, and perchance are
 gray.
 In fair Ohio—long, long time ago—
 In distant Kansas, and in Michigan,
 In far Iowa and in Illinois,
 This vigorous branch took root, again
 And yet again—from th' river to the sea,
 Like pendants of a mighty Banyan tree.
 The other branches, grand and noble too,
 I leave for abler ones to dwell upon,
 Bringing glad greetings from East and West,
 I represent today the clan of John ;
 Yet are we one—united let us stand,
 The bond to ratify "Give us your hand."
 God bless us and speed us for the right,
 Never may Johnson blood disgrace the name;
 Our country's greatest need is noble men,
 Who know their duty well, and do the same ;
 Let each his motto for the future make,
 "I'll do the right, and consequences take."
 Among the foliage of our spreading boughs,
 Bloomed many flowers which now, in vain we
 seek ;
 Forgive me if I take a moment here,
 Their dear, familiar names once more to
 speak ;
 Those dear names, which so well the angels
 know,
 Like half-forgotten music, sound below.
 Edwin, with raven hair and eagle eye,
 The traveler, to us so wondrous wise,
 Who told us stories strange of distant wilds,
 Which we drank in with open ears and eye ;
 The grass and flowers of sunny Texas wave,
 In beauty, o'er his unknown, lonely grave.
 And Jackson in a dreamless slumber lies,
 Under the south's bright skies and balmy air,
 Frail Ann Eliza, orphaned in life's morn,
 Took wing for Heaven, to meet her mother
 there ;
 William is gone—Sherman, in manhood young
 And bright Augusta of the silver tongue.

Another star with pure, mild radiance shone,
Sweet Lydia Ann—then lost itself in light;
Nestus, who shared her earliest sports and love,
Has joined her in the world beyond our sight;
While restless Eleanor, of dauntless will,
With folded hands, sleeps on our burial hill.

In life's bright morning, faded like the flowers,
Katie and Frank; our artist cousin, Will,
Painted, till hectic dushed his cheeks, and died;
And witty, merry John, in death is still;
How incomplete the record, yet how long;
I'll dry my tears and sing a livelier song.

I sing the quiet beauty of this dale,
The verdant fields, and gently rising hills,
The pleasant walk along the shady lane,
The flower bespangled meads and purring rills,
The mossy forests where the wild flowers grew,
The grand old elms, and neighboring mill-pond blue.

I hear the sturdy workman whet his scythe,
I smell the clover and the new made hay,
Neath spreading shade trees see the well fed kine,
Or wandering slowly home at close of day;
How like enchanted land it all appears.
As I review it through the mist of years.

In Spring and Summer through the woods we strayed,
Or gathered treasures on the berry hill;
And Autumn brought the merry chestnut time,
On frosty mornings, when the nights were chill;
And when the winter clothed the earth in white,
And froze the streams, our pleasure reached its height.

How lovely night when shone the round, full moon,
And chirped the crickets in its mellow glow;
When stars peeped out like jewels in the sky,
And in the meadows croaked the frogs below,

While tiny glow worms, with their merry ways,
Of fairy fireworks, gave us fine displays.

But time would fail me and your patience tire,
Should I attempt the picture to complete,
Which memory paints, with colors rich and clear,

As here I sit delighted at her feet;
So bright each joy appears when life is new,
As sparkle diamonds in the morning dew.

Yet should we not, with tears and sad regret,
Sigh o'er the past, and wish it back again;
Our life is richer now than e'er before,
And happier days for future years remain;

Old age should bring our best and sweetest hours.

As peaches ripe, excel their bright, pink flowers.

We say life ends, we call it death, and weep;
Because our faith is weak, we dread the tomb;

For those who trust in Christ, there is no death,
And since He rose the grave has lost its gloom;

More of our friends above than linger here;
How much like home, to us, will Heaven appear.

How shall we know each other when we meet,
How shall we know ourselves, but through the past?

The pleasant memories of the life below
Will through the ages of the future last;
And we may talk this happy meeting o'er,
With grandpa Isaac, on the "Shining Shore."

On such a perfect summer day as this,
When earth, in beauty clothed with smiling face,

Like a fair charmer lures the heavens to stoop
And fold her in a love-like embrace,
Quivers the ambient air with light and heat,
And the heavens and earth seem one, in union sweet.

How thin the veil appears that separates
The heavenly world from ours on such a day;
Spirits are free to wander as they will,
Methinks they cannot linger far away;
O, were our ears attuned to finer things,
We now might hear the rustling of their wings.

But these delightful hours are flying fast,
Too soon the sinking sun will gild the west,
The distant windows glorify, and hills adorn;
I'll close at once that you may hear the rest;
And where you notice blunder, or mistake,
Excuse the writer, for the subject's sake.

INTERESTING FAMILY RE-UNION.

The following communication to the *Lansing Republican* will doubtless be read with considerable interest:

At Southboro, Mass., June 26, there took place a reunion of the Johnson Family which was attended by Miss Julia Robinson of Lansing, whose grandmother on her father's side was a Johnson. The following extracts from a private letter by Miss Robinson will be found interesting:

As regards weather, it was one of the days of the fogs. We started at 7.00 from our home in Framingham, and sauntered along for

the entire seven miles, every rod of the way, almost, being filled up with some story that had happened on this and that spot. As we rode along, I felt 'so young' like David Copperfield. Every house was of good size and shaded by heavy trees which had stood from 100 to 200 years.

I had most peculiar sensations as we entered the old cemetery and stood by the graves of the family. I laid a beautiful red rose wet with dew upon the grave of my great, great, great, great grandfather. I did really! and there are the old gentlemen, all from him, down to my great grandfather. I could hardly read the inscriptions, for the old fashioned letters, and the moss in the chiseling of the tomb stones.

We reached the old homestead about 10 A. M. Already many people were there. On the grounds were evergreen arches and mottoes, and old family dates made of white and green. A big band headed the procession of 250 people, all with Johnson blood in their veins. They marched to a beautiful strain of music, to different points of interest on the farm and then we all went into the big tent to hear the history and the poem.

The history told all the good of our kin and left out the bad, if any one knew of such having been done by us. At the close the reader spoke of the length of time which the land had remained in this family and the history ended in this way: England's safety lies in the fact that her lands are entailed in law and love. America's danger lies in the fact that her children are never homesick.

An original poem was read by a handsome woman, Mrs. Johnson Wheeler, one line of which was,

"Who ever saw a Johnson with a frozen heart?"

A couplet said:

"None of us, kind heaven be thanked,
Ever got into Congress or plundered a bank."

At dinner, we poured into our tea or coffee, milk from a cow which had been on the farm just one hundred years; I mean she descended in regular order from a cow placed on the old homestead one hundred years ago.

It was a wonderful day to me, wonderful! I felt as if in a dream. We stayed all night in the house built by my great great grandfather, Isaac Johnson, and in which he died. My greatest pleasure has been in tracing out these old-time facts; and I must confess, although intensely fascinating, it is yet painful, and I am conscious of a strong desire for a breath from the wide-awake western world to let me know that I am not suffocating in the ancestral vault.

You should see the lovely old china, and the old, old furniture, with which the old house is yet filled. In fact every room in the house looked ancient beyond my remembrance of furniture. In one room stands such a three cornered chair as we saw in the artists' studio at Yale, and a clock 200 years old; it keeps good time, still I fancy that it ticks feebly, like a tired old man's pulse. It did seem as if I must have one of the handsome old chairs of English make which were so long ago brought over.

I have been aided here, by records, to grope my way back until I find my ancestors on old Hone Hill, Kent County, England, from which place two brothers, Edward and William, came to America in 1637. I am descended from William Johnson.

So it seems we began to grow on this soil 243 years ago. I saw the Jerico Hill on which the Indians scalped my great grandfather's brother, and for which one of the Indian chiefs was taken near Boston and hung; and I stooped and drank from the spring of living water which rises in that hill and into which his blood no doubt flowed.

1922

